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UNCLAS ADANA 0080

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/NGA AND PRM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM TU ADANA

SUBJECT: POPULATION MOVEMENT IN NORTHERN
IRAQ NOT TOWARD TURKEY

¶1. (SBU) Summary: According to contacts in southeastern Turkey, population movements in northern Iraq in anticipation of war are not toward the Turkish border. Rather, those on the move are generally seeking to leave cities for the perceived safety of villages higher up in the hills. The Habur gate is calm for now. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) With the situation in northern Iraq quite fluid, we offer the following information relayed to us on March 18 by various contacts in southeastern Turkey.

Hakkari
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¶3. (SBU) The mayor of Hakkari and one of our Hakkari human-rights contacts both confirm that they have received no information about refugees heading toward Hakkari province's border with Iraq. That border is covered with snow, they note. Their contacts in northern Iraq have spoken of internal refugee movements within northern Iraq only.

Sirnak
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¶4. (SBU) The UNHCR Coordinator in Silopi, who has been travelling extensively, said he had neither seen nor heard of refugee movement toward the Turkish border for now. He believed the pattern of internal movement inside northern Iraq consists of people leaving cities (notably Mosul and Dohuk) for the countryside, particularly the mountains. The migrants' logic is that cities are perceived as more likely to be attacked. Sirnak province's Habur gate between Turkey and Iraq is very calm at the moment, he said, something that was confirmed by an oil-trader in Silopi who has good contacts in northern Iraq.
HOLTZ